

THE SANITARY BOARD MEETING.

A meeting of the Sanitary Board was held this afternoon. Mr. F. A. Cooper (Director of Public Works) presided, and there were also present Mr. J. M. Atkinson (Colonial Surgeon), Capt. W. C. Hastings (Acting Captain Superintendent of Police), Mr. N. J. Ede, and Mr. Hugh McCallum (Secretary).

The minutes of the last meeting were read and confirmed.

WASHING TANKS.

A letter from the Colonial Secretary dated the 7th instant was read setting forth that the Chinese washmen were in the habit of washing clothes in pools in the Tai Hang, Tung Lo Wan and Pak Shui Wal streams, where they collected the water from the hills. These Chinese entered the water, and in the dry season, when water was scarce, this often got into a filthy state. When the water was released from the pools it was allowed to run into the rocky below, and produced a state of affairs far from sanitary. It is therefore proposed to build up the valleys with masonry and concrete, and level off the ground, so as to construct reservoirs. In these reservoirs it is proposed to store the water during the rainy season for use during the dry months, and it is further proposed that the water be laid on to the washing establishments and supplied by measurement. In view of the difficulty experienced in letting the wash-houses in Wanchai, it is thought better to leave a suitable portion of land about the streams unoccupied, and to allow the washmen to erect their own tanks there subject to their arrangements being approved of by the Public Works Department. The cost of these arrangements is estimated as about \$70,000, which is chargeable against the loan under the heading "water and drainage works." If the proposal is agreed to by the Sanitary Board plans will be at once proceeded with.

This was minutes by Mr. Ede:—I think the scheme a good one; but will the washmen leave the land or will they go further afield where they can do their washing without paying for their water?

The Colonial Surgeon asked:—Has the Board any information with reference to the establishment in the Colony of Japanese laundries?

The Board decided to notify the Government that it approves of the scheme.

THE BOARD'S BOOKS.

Mr. Reece's letter requesting that his clerk be allowed to examine the register of burials of cows and bullocks in Hongkong or Yaukai, was read. The Secretary had refused to allow it to be done.

Mr. Ede minutes that he thought the books should not be examined, but that the Secretary might furnish the information sought for if it was for a bona fide purpose. This was concurred in by the minutes of the Colonial Surgeon and Acting Captain Superintendent of Police.

INSANITARY BACK-YARDS.

Correspondence relating to structures in the back-yards of houses No. 2 to 8 George Lane was read. The agents, the Hongkong Land Investment Company, were notified on the 18th September, by the Board's orders, to remove the structures there. As no steps were taken they were given a reminder on the 5th November, as the time allowed had expired. On the 14th November the Company replied that the sheds had been put up with the buildings in 1883, on plans satisfactory to the Public Works Department, and that the drainage had lately been looked to and the houses put in a thoroughly sanitary state. Permission was therefore asked to allow the structures to remain. The Medical Officer of Health reported on the 10th inst. that he had inspected the premises, and as the structures were clearly in contravention of the Ordinances, and a menace to the health of the occupants, they should be removed.

Decided to insist on the removal of the premises.

THE ODD VOLUMES.

The following is the annual report of the Council (1894-95), to be presented to members of the Odd Volumes Society at the meeting to be held in the Hongkong Hotel to-morrow evening:—

The Council have much pleasure in presenting you with the Third Annual Report, which they trust will be considered satisfactory.

Since the last report was issued to this Society, seven very successful meetings were held, which, as will be seen in the following list, have been of a varied description:—

22nd November.—Annual general meeting and social gathering. Farewell presentation to Mr. Sidney Jeffrey.

21st December.—Adjourned general meeting for Confirmation of Rules. Mr. J. J. Francis read a paper on "Current Opinion on the China-Japan Question and England's Interests in regard thereto."

4th January.—An Address on "The Regulation of the Liquor Traffic" by Mr. W. E. Crow. Followed by a debate.

18th January.—Lecture by the Hon. E. J. Acland:—"Should Imprisonment be inflicted in default of Payment of Fines?"

31st January.—The Hon. F. H. May's Lecture on "The Local Importance of the Preservation of Game in Hongkong."

15th February.—A Lecture on "The Philosophy of the Sub-conscious" by Dr. E. J. Zittel.

15th March.—Mrs. J. Bishop F.R.G.S., &c., delivered a lecture on "A Journey Through Western Tibet." Mrs. Bishop was elected an Hon. Member of the Society.

22nd March.—Mr. J. J. Plummer, M.A., read a paper on "Meteorology."

15th April.—Mr. E. F. Skerrett read a paper on "The Customs, Legends and Superstitions of the Cagayan Salus."

19th April.—A Lecture on "Argon: the newly discovered constituent of the Atmosphere." By Mr. Frank Brown, F. C. S.

18th May.—Mr. A. W. E. O. Dyer's paper on "A Journey up the Chindwin River."

25th May.—Mr. Sydney B. J. Skerrett delivered his Farewell Address. Mr. Skerrett was elected an Hon. Member of the Society.

19th July.—Meeting at the Mount Austin Hotel, The Peak. Lecture on "The China-Japan War." By Mr. T. C. Cowen, the Times Correspondent at the Seat of War.

Special Meetings have been held by the Photographic Section of the society, which was inaugurated on the 23rd April last, when Mr. Wickham was elected Hon. Secretary of the Section.

Mr. Skerrett, one of the founders of the Society, and whose name has been thoroughly identified with the "Odd Volumes" left Hongkong for Australia in May, thus depriving the Council of the valuable assistance they have always received from him.

The Council tender their best thanks to those gentlemen who so ably assisted at the various meetings during the past session.

A new Council will have to be elected at the annual general meeting which will be held in the Hongkong Hotel on Friday, 22nd November, 1895.

From the statement of accounts annexed it will be seen that there is a balance of \$147.15 standing to the credit of the Society.

W. H. PURCELL, Hon. Secretary.

Hongkong, 18th November, 1895.

A NEW FOE TO FLAMES.

The San Francisco Chronicle of the 17th ultimo contains interesting information relative to what is styled a "Fireman's Smoke Protector." The Times-Herald was the first in the field with the details of this useful adjunct to a fireman's outfit, which, it appears, is the invention of Chief Swenke of the Chicago Fire Department, who has supplied his own brigade with the "protector," which it is claimed is "a protection for firemen and may in many cases save the lives of persons imperilled by smoke and flames." The Chronicle describes the apparatus in the following manner:—

The apparatus adopted by the Chicago department and which is to supplant all other helmets like the headgear of a diver when he is preparing to descend into the water with his bell. It consists of a helmet placed over the head and face and fitting closely to the shoulders. The outer circumference of the helmet is an asbestos-tanned leather or asbestos cloth, which is proof against fire, heat, steam, boiling water and all poisonous gases or fumes. This helmet is held to the body by two straps which pass under the arms.

The contrivance is practically as tight, but has an apparatus of its own, a metal reservoir at its back, with a capacity of 100 pounds pressure of compressed air, which supplies the wearer with all the breathing material which he may need for from twenty minutes to one hour. This air supply before reaching the helmet is filtered and comes to him as he breathes, as pure as the air he would take out of doors. A gauge is attached to the air reservoir by which the amount of air pressure can readily be determined at all times.

By coding Maung U and Maung U-tai to France, China has broken the Burmo-Chinese Convention and made it of no effect. By prevailing upon China to cede to it these two districts of Kiang Hung and by claiming trade facilities in that State, including the extension of French railways through it to Siam, etc., the Convention which was to be shared by any other nation, France has acted in direct contravention of the agreement made between M. Deville and Lord Dufferin on December 1st, 1893, whereby it was understood that in respect of railways, steamboat companies, or any other mode of transit or communication, Kiang Hung, if handed over to China, will be left open to French and English enterprise. Again the Burmo-Chinese Convention has been broken by the Chinese provincial authorities in Yunnan refusing to act up to the commercial clauses of the convention. Previous to the ratification of the convention in August, 1884, the duties levied between Bhamo and Yunnan-Fu, the capital of Yunnan—along the only route left open by the convention to British trade—amounted to over six times the aggregate amount of the import and transit duty combined as sanctioned by the convention. Yet we have recently learned, on the best authority, that the convention was signed there has been but a "slight relaxation of the exorbitant duties exacted by the Chinese officials," and that "it is rather doubtful whether this relaxation will be permanent."

"China having glaringly infringed the Burmo-Chinese Convention, Lord Salisbury has the duty at his feet to let us see whether he will win the goal for Great Britain, or whether he will disappoint the hopes of our commercial and industrial communities by allowing the trade, present and future, of the great market of Southern China to pass into the hands of our French rivals."

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RUSSIA AND MANCHURIA.

In the early part of last month the London Globe published the following:—

The mist concealing Russian proceedings in Eastern Asia are gradually dissolving. All the same, it is noteworthy that the St. Petersburg censorship actually allows the Novosti to make known how extensive are the Czar's warlike preparations on the Manchurian frontier.

The outside world was previously aware that strong reinforcements were being most continuously dispatched from the Black Sea to Vladivostok. But our contemporary adds the interesting information that a similar flow of fighting strength has been setting towards Manchuria ever since last May. In artillery alone, the augmentation already amounts to six batteries, and, no doubt, more will follow in due course. The Novosti explains, as it was, of course, bound to do, that these apparently menacing measures have no other purpose than the protection of the Amer region from Japanese invasion. The old story of the wolf and the lamb! We wonder that Russian journalists are not tired of repeating that ancient fable. Do they really expect Europe to believe that the Japanese meditate the invasion of Eastern Russia? There is no more chance of that than of the Falkland Islanders attempting to conquer Argentina. The truth is that the Czar is getting ready to slip his legions into Manchuria, with or without Chinese consent, as soon as the Japanese evacuate the Liaotung Peninsula. With refreshing candour, the Novosti almost admits as much. It boasts that the large augmentation of the Russian artillery "will enable a further increase to be made in the infantry and cavalry, and thus a considerable force of all three arms will be able to take the field." Remembering that there are already 90,000 Russian soldiers at and near Vladivostok, a force amply sufficient to defend the frontier even if the Japanese meditated attack, there can be no doubt whatever that the Czar has some widely different object in view. What that object is we have repeatedly pointed out—the bringing down of the eastern extremity of the Siberian railway to the Gulf of Pechili, and the creation there of a Russian arsenal, and strongly fortified naval port. Once that position is attained, the Czar will have tight hold on the throat of the Asiatic "elephant."

NOT TO FIGHT EXCEPT IN SELF-DEFENCE.

In addition to this force a body of fifty Houses under Captain Hawley was ready to be despatched from Accra. Prayers on the borders of Ashanti, reminding those in case of necessity to support the mission and to guard the frontier. This force had two y-pencers and a Maxim, and a large quantity of ammunition. A further force of fifty troops armed with rifles, but having no machine-guns, was held in readiness at Kintia awaiting instructions to effect a junction with Captain Hawley's force at Pranku. Mr. Maxwell, the Governor, was visiting the Government instructions at Accra. He received orders to despatch the mission on September 9th. Sir Francis further said:—"The Gold Coast Colony can never be quiet until Ashanti has been brought under British rule. It is an impossibility. On and off, there have always been difficulties with these people. The Queen-mother, the mother of the young King, is a powerful factor in the country, and is responsible for much that occurs. In spite of the constant sample made in London, Ashanti's machinery continues—at any rate, every day in the history whether black or white, believes in them, and

for the most part they take place at Coomassie, and for these the King is directly responsible. A SERIOUS BLOW WILL BE GIVEN TO BRITISH PRESTIGE.

If Coomassie be not taken now. Tribes which have seceded from the King of Coomassie and are now friendly to us will otherwise assuredly return to their former leader. It is not too much to say that all these chiefs are now waiting like a hen on a fence to see which way we go. Hitherto we have always given into Ashanti, with the result that to-day they scarcely believe we will send an expedition against them. Everything depends upon the reply to the ultimatum, which we shall probably receive during the first week of November. If the King absolutely refuses to accept a British protectorate it will be necessary to dispatch a strong force of Imperial troops, not necessarily white troops. Some special service officers will be required from England. A force of, say, 100 troops from Lagos, 600 Gold Coast House, and a battalion of the West India Regiment, which I found worked so well in the Juba campaign, would in my opinion be sufficient. Our relations with our French and German neighbours are most friendly.

LEGAL INTELLIGENCE.

SUPREME COURT.

SUMMARY JURISDICTION.

(Before His Honour Mr. Justice Wilson.)

November 21st.

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This was a suit in which the plaintiff, who was complainant for the defendant firm, sued for money he alleged were due him on leaving the employ of the firm. The case had been partially heard previously, when the evidence of the plaintiff was taken and the case adjourned for the attendance of the head-of-the-defendant-firm. Mr. C. Evans appeared for the plaintiff and Mr. Grist (of Messrs. Wilkinson and Grist) for the defendants.

As Mr. Danenberg, of the defendant firm, did not put in an appearance, His Lordship gave judgment for the plaintiff for \$397.68 and costs.

PICTURES.

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COMMERCIAL NEWS.

HONGKONG FREIGHT MARKET.

Hongkong, November 21st.

In their Freight Circular issued to-day Messrs. Lamke and Rogge write:—

Our market remains much the same as last reported; rates for export destinations are ruling low, and an early improvement must not be looked for.

SPERMATOZOES.—Business from Saigon to this continues to drag considerably. There we have a cargo of a very small quantity of old rice left over, it is being held at prohibitive prices, so much so, that no chartering has been done from Saigon during the fortnight except to this port, and as for the few fixtures in our direction, the rates given are so unremunerative that the steamers look them for their necessity only. The new crop, from all regions where the rice is being raised, according to latest Saigon news, being very reasonable so far, but it is agreed that it is too early yet to arrive at a definite conclusion as to the yield.

As to Bangkok business, the same remarks apply as to the prospects for the ensuing season. The crop looks promising, and the fact bears this out that already there have been enquiries as to rates likely to be accepted by steamers for a season of 100,000 tons of rice, being very reasonable so far, but it is agreed that it is too early yet to arrive at a definite conclusion as to the yield.

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